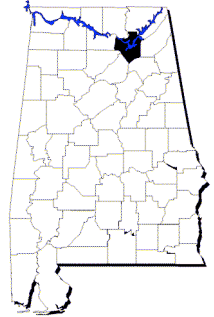


MARSHALL COUNTY

Honorable Howard Hawk

Marshall County Courthouse
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Sherri Vaughn
Jeannie Wallace
James Watkins
Cindy Wigley
Janice Wilson
John Young

Council Priorities

1. Work with the community to develop an educational component in a centrally located Family Resource Center.

All children in Marshall County will have the opportunity to succeed in school. Many children would benefit from an alternative education program (not discipline) which includes job preparation and technical training.

2. Decrease the high rate of substance abuse (drugs, alcohol, and tobacco) in our county.

Collaborate with Marshall County UPS, schools, media, other agencies, and parents to provide information regarding the risks and dangers of substance abuse.

3. Support initiatives for a countywide alternative (education, not discipline) school.

All students in Marshall County need to have access to technical training. Efforts should be made to reach those students who may be behind academically and those at risk of dropping out of school.

Issues

Issues are the primary concerns or problems facing children in the county

Early Care Education

Children (0 – 5) are provided opportunities to fully develop emotionally, socially, physically, and cognitively and are ready to succeed.

Shortage of quality early care/programs

Action Steps

- 1) Educate the public to recognize and value quality of early childhood care/programs with a local and state as campaign and information distribution.
- 2) Offer training and professional development to childcare providers and staff.
- 3) Organize a grass roots effort to educate and to lobby for support from local and state government leaders.
- 4) Provide incentives for all childcare centers and preschools that obtain standards established for NAEYC accreditation. Work towards establishing a "seal of approval" rating for child care providers who meet these standards in our county.

Lack of parenting skills across all socio-economic groups

Action Steps

- 1) Host support group meetings for parents to provide parent education.

Need for fully funded 4 year-old programs in public schools

Action Steps

- 1) Express support to state government for further funding of OSR model Pre-K sites throughout the state.
- 2) Work with LEA, Special Education Administrators and Title I Parent Advisory Councils to allocate a percentage of at-risk and early intervention funds for Pre-K programs in the public schools.

Economic Security

Children grow up in a financially stable home where the child's basic needs can be met.

Increase career/technical education and training for students and graduates

Action Steps

- 1) Work with schools and businesses to implement/expand job shadowing and training opportunities (Survey schools, career center, and Launch to determine what is currently in place).
- 2) Coordinate with local education systems to increase enrollment in career/technical education.
- 3) Promote technical training to high school seniors who do not plan to attend a four year college.
- 4) Promote technical training in a positive manner.

Provide employment education and career planning for youth in Marshall County

Action Steps

- 1) Provide education classes for youth to teach them how to complete applications, how to present for interviews, and other necessary skills to obtain employment.
- 2) Provide the Real World for high school, students and those who have dropped out of school.

Support initiatives for county wide alternative (education, not discipline) school

Action Steps

- 1) Increase technical training opportunities for students.
- 2) Promote Launch and GED classes for students who have already dropped out of school. This could be accomplished through the media, service agencies, and schools.
- 3) Implement program to address the needs of students who do not qualify for Launch.

Education

Children learn the skills necessary to become productive citizens.

Work with the community to develop an educational component in a centrally located Family Resource Center

Action Steps

- 1) Schedule meetings for professionals to brainstorm ideas.
- 2) Work closely with coordinator and committees of the UPS grant.

Develop a mechanism to allow teachers, school counselors, and others who work with at-risk students to share ideas and information

Action Steps

- 1) Schedule at least one annual meeting per year for sharing ideas.
- 2) Develop a method for distributing information that is derived at these meetings.

Work with agencies, school staff members, and others to reduce school drop outs and alcohol abuse among teens

Action Steps

- 1) Work with UPS committee to implement tutoring programs for 8th grade students who are at-risk of dropping out of school.
- 2) Assist in implementing a SAMHSA model program for 8th grade students who are at-risk of failing.
- 3) Assist in developing and implementing mentoring programs in schools.

Health

Children's (0 - 19) physical and mental well-being in the county.

Marshall County's high rate of teen pregnancy

Action Steps

- 1) Educate parents in ways to communicate with their teens in order to help the children make good decisions regarding their sexuality.
- 2) Explore ways to encourage teens to seek health advice from professionals.
- 3) Explore ways to create a youth/teen club where teens may participate in arts, music, recreation, and education.

Lack of services for children (and their parents) with a variety of special needs such as autism, ADHD, etc.

Action Steps

- 1) Contact our local mental health leaders expressing support for efforts to recruit a child psychiatrist to our county.
- 2) Compile a list of available services for children with special needs and distribute to local school, churches, and other organizations which serve children.
- 3) Work with our local mental health center to educate the public about the need for these services.

High rate of substance use (including drugs, alcohol, and tobacco) by children in our county

Action Steps

- 1) Collaborate with our county unified prevention services in their efforts to decrease substance use by children in our county.
- 2) Work with the other county organizations which are trying to curb the increase in use of drugs, alcohol, and tobacco by our children.
- 3) Provide education to parents regarding the health risks and dangers of substance abuse through schools and faith based organizations as well as through newspaper and radio PSA's.

Parent Involvement Skills

Parents and guardians participation and effectiveness in fostering an environment for children to become mature, responsible and independent adults.

Increase support for extended family members raising children in the absence of biological parents

Action Steps

- 1) Assess for existing Head Start, Even Start, public school safety, and parenting.
- 2) Search for an evidence based parenting program which demonstrates the effectiveness with early child population.

Improve parenting involvement

Action Steps

- 1) Continue to promote and improve parent tip and word of the week.
- 2) Promote school's web sites and links that assist parents with staying informed of their child's education and helpful parenting suggestions.

Improve parenting skills

Action Steps

- 1) Promote parenting tools and information through the distribution of parenting informational brochures through out the community.
- 2) Collaborate and assist in already established county parenting programs.

Safety

Children live free of abuse, neglect, crime, and drugs.

Provide opportunities for safe and meaningful visitation for children at risk of abuse and neglect

Action Steps

- 1) Identify children in need of supervised visitation.
- 2) Develop mechanism for referral to utilized supervised visitation services.

Decrease family dynamic situations of children living with parent/guardians that are using and manufacturing crystal methamphetamine and other illegal narcotic drugs

Action Steps

- 1) To assess nature and extent of substance abuse problems of Marshall County parents.
- 2) Develop collaborative efforts among the Department of Human Resources, Court System, and treatment providers for the early identification of substance abusing parents.
- 3) To identify, outside of the criminal justice system, parents/guardians subject to addiction.

Empower all communities within Marshall County to make safety-wise decisions for themselves and their children

Action Steps

- 1) Encourage the use of child-restraint seats and automobile safety-belts through demonstrations and explanations of the benefits of device usage.
- 2) Promote domestic violence/family violence awareness campaigns within Marshall County.
- 3) Promote community awareness of diverse cultural backgrounds and norms of the Marshall County population.

Policy Recommendations

- Notify each school and agency of the requirements necessary to apply for and receive grant approval from the Education Committee.
- The State Department of Education should provide additional funding for vocational education in the local education systems.
- The State Department of Education should require local education systems to provide adequate vocational training.
- The State Department of Human Resources should address policies relating to educational neglect/accountability.
- The State Department of Education should incorporate more family planning in health class curriculum.